



The mission of Oxton Academy high school has been the focus of numerous dedicated educators since being awarded the Charter School Expansion Grant in February of 2021. That mission is to serve students who require academic success supported by innovations in curriculum delivery, teacher training and empowerment, and a safe, supportive environment that promotes value and dignity through discipline, responsibility, and high expectations, as students pursue their high school diploma and life's ambitions.

Oxton Academy's approach to a small, safe and student-centered high school setting with options for high demand and high interest career preparation will serve the district's least engaged students that have not seen success and/or have dropped out with very limited career opportunities. The school's unique design, with a focus on student empowerment, is particularly attractive to those individuals requiring a different approach to learning. Oxton Academy's academic plan builds on a standards-based curriculum tied directly to career education offering practical, skill-based knowledge and industry certifications. It is extremely important for our targeted population to not only see the result of a successful high school career, but to also experience that result through the educational process.

There are several categories that we will address, and our expertise in those categories met all the standards according to CMCSS Review Committee members. Here are the categories and our capacity to manage each distinctive area in this high school:

### **Academic Design**

The leadership group of Oxton Academy High School designed an academic plan that not only differs from the District's traditional high schools, but offers a unique approach for building on student strengths, while mitigating any deficits. In its initial review of the Oxton application, the CMCSS Review Committee cited strong pedagogical practices that are research-based and focused on individualized learning aligned with State standards and the student's modality. Moreover, it was noted that this approach is particularly beneficial for supporting special needs students. In its subsequent recommendation for approval, the CMCSS Review Committee indicated that Oxton's submission has shown, "*an admirable, compelling, measurable mission and vision,*" in our Academic Design & Capacity standard. The Academic plan ensures that students will have a strict alignment between curriculum resources (already in use in the State of TN), planned assessments, and post-school day tutoring (free) services. This was recognized by the CMCSS Review Committee in their evaluation notes: "*They provided additional materials to show alignment between their curricular and assessment materials and the Tennessee Academic Standards.*"

### **Operations Plans**

Oxton Academy High School, through its consulting groups, has already engaged the services of national experts in the creation of school buildings, and they are actively researching sites for the

purchase or lease of a facility. There also exists a possibility to locate existing school sites in the community that are currently available. The school leaders have accounted for the potential delays in this process and have developed substantive contingency plans to ensure compliance with all permits, regulations, and local concerns regarding a safe school environment.

The daily functions of transportation, school meals, employee acquisition and retention, and safety & security requirements have all been successfully planned, and as noted by the review committee, *“They added information that provided a level of concreteness to their facilities planning and contingencies, allowing them to be realistic and able to be executed quickly.”* The committee also noted that, *“They added an extensive safety plan based on the Tennessee Department of Education Rubric, and they added more information about their health plans.”*

### **Financial Plans**

The non-profit organization (One on One Children’s Services) has arranged for financing that, according to the approved budget as reviewed by the CMCSS review team, has access to sufficient capital to purchase/lease a school site, provide a safe, innovative and physically comfortable environment, and has a five-year plan that is fiscally sound and based on realistic data projections.

In summarizing the Oxton Academy High School financial plan, the CMCSS review committee stated this in their final report: *“The applicant, through both the interview and the amended application process, were able to communicate access to additional capital that helped assure the Review Committee that they could receive more financial backing.”*

### **Community Engagement & Support**

Oxton Academy’s sponsors have created a dialog with many of Montgomery County’s industries and is now active in working with **The Clarksville Chamber of Commerce**, who met with school leaders and has developed an ongoing process of brokering meetings with industry leaders. **The Industrial Board of Development (IDB)** co-hosted a meeting with the Chamber and permitted a school representative to make a presentation to local community business representatives. **LG Electronics**, a worldwide leader in the manufacturing of home appliances was present at the meeting and met with a school rep at its facility, leading to an agreement to continue their support for the school’s growth and development. **Hankook** had a team of HR staff meet with the school rep to discuss curriculum needs, and the head of their HR department committed the company to providing advice, support and possibly lab equipment to feed their hiring pipeline. Oxton Academy is also collaborating with **Austin-Peay State University**, **Tennessee College of Applied Technology** and **Bethel University** for the purpose of building bridges for college articulation. This will provide Oxton graduates with an important option for post-secondary training and degree opportunities.

### **Parent Support**

Since the most recent approval recommendation by the CMCSS Review Committee, we have received emails from parents to inquire regarding enrollment, and these communications were not solicited through any kind of advertising on the part of the school. Additionally, several parents vocalized their concerns about the status of their educational choices during the School Board meeting, and they indicated that they did not feel that they had enough choice available to them.

### **Physical Environment Attributes**

The school facility and data projections for enrollment are intentionally small in size, given the targeted population is initially expected to be overage, under-credit students who may require attention and remediation to basic skills prior to acceleration into grade-level coursework. Research has shown that students typically improve their academic status in a smaller population where their needs can be identified, supported and constantly monitored and adjusted by staff with more specialized knowledge of learning modalities and individualized programs. Moreover, additional research cited in our application demonstrates that disengaged students do better when they feel connected to their instructors. This important aspect of student engagement will be facilitated through Oxton Academy's small school environment that reinforces a sense of connectedness. Further The physical environment of a venue that is more akin to a college atmosphere or business setting will keep students comfortable in a more relaxed setting. Quite literally, we are planning a "home away from home" model that has been successfully constructed in multiple school districts across the nation.

### **Enrollment & Population Growth Pattern of Clarksville, TN**

The enrollment projections and assumptions of school growth are foundationally sound, and based on current trends in the district, as well as growth patterns in the community. According to census data, Montgomery County has grown by 47,738 people to a total of 220,069. That's a 27.7% increase over the past 10 years. Clarksville by itself has grown by 33,793 people to a total of 166,722, a 25.4% change over the last 10 years.

The CMCSS is experiencing record growth and will require additional facilities to house incoming students in the next three years. This was substantiated by increased attendance during Covid, where nationally most schools saw a marked decline. Our high school will alleviate imminent overcrowding. The enrollment projections and assumptions of school growth for this high school are foundationally sound and based on current population trends in the community. The committee agreed, and noted, *"They provided explanations around their enrollment projections and data assumptions that alleviated earlier concerns from Review Committee members."*

### **SUMMARY**

In summary of all the above, denying the charter application to this school is contrary to the expressed interests of students, their families, the local business community, and the leaders in higher education who are seeking partnerships to provide all students with post-secondary opportunities for careers and lifelong skills. This school seeks to provide an alternative, smaller setting that is rich in academic content, respectful of the different learning needs of special education students, and a pipeline to local businesses who have already indicated their interest in seeing the school built for future employee training.

The 4-3 vote of denial of this application for Oxton Academy by the School Board, after recommendation for approval by the School District's Review Committee, indicates to us that the approval of choice in public education is on the minds of many constituents in Clarksville. Denying those opportunities is contrary to the mission of public education in the State of Tennessee, and it is the hope of the Oxton Academy High School Governing Board that the State Commission will see this school as an asset for students who may not be as successful in larger school settings that cannot easily individualize their learning needs and career pathways, and a great benefit to the community in establishing future success in their lives.